

Safety Planning

It can be good to think about a safety plan before you leave, so that you can think about what you and your children can do during an abusive and/or violent situation.



WARNING: SOME OF THE INFORMATION IN THIS FACT SHEET MAY BE DIFFICULT TO READ. PLEASE TAKE YOUR TIME AND FIND ASSISTANCE IF YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO.

It is important to look at your safety plan again if you leave the relationship to make sure that it is still helpful for your circumstances.

If the safety plan is to work, you should not let your abusive partner see it. It is a good idea to talk with someone that you trust. It is also important to keep up your usual activities and routines so that your partner does not get 'suspicious' that you might be leaving or that something has changed.

I am still in an abusive relationship

- Where can you go that is safe? Places could include family, friends and/or a women's refuge. You should always try to take the kids with you.
- Do not tell anyone your plan/s unless you are sure that you can trust them.
- Try to organise transport in advance, such as booking a taxi or organising a lift from friends or family.
- Try to get your GP to include notes in your medical records about any injuries that you may have from physical and/or sexual abuse.
- Make a list of the paperwork and documents that you need to take with you if you leave. You could leave these with a trusted friend or family member so you can get them quickly or you could organise to get someone else to get them for you. You could also hide them from your partner. These could include:
 - Essential medications
 - Some cash to make emergency phone calls and your bank cards



ENDING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP IS ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS PERIODS OF THE RELATIONSHIP, SO YOU SHOULD ONLY LEAVE IF IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

- House keys.
- Birth certificate/s and driver's licence.
- Any mortgage or legal documents.

Do not risk yours or your children's safety to retrieve personal possessions. They can be replaced. You and your children cannot.

- Try to talk to a domestic violence service before you end the relationship.
- Who can you call safely if you are in danger? Make a list of numbers for the people and services that you can call.
- If you have a neighbour you trust and who is not close to your abusive partner, ask them to call the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from your house.

- Come up with a code word that you can use to let your friends or family know that you need to get out now.
- It is ok to lie to avoid violence.
- If you are unable to leave safely, try to keep your back against a door or wall and avoid places in the house that have dangerous objects.
- If you can, practice getting yourself and your children to your safe place.
- Keep boxes and bags in a place that you can get to easily in case you need to leave or have a prepacked bag ready to go.
- Decide on any arrangements that you may need to make to keep the children safe.

I have ended the abusive relationship, or I am leaving

- Do you have a current family violence order (FVO)? Make sure the conditions are still relevant and go to the police or a solicitor to have it amended if necessary. Make sure to keep the FVO, or a photo of it, with you always.
- Let the kids' school and your employer know about the situation and provide them with a copy of your FVO if you have one.
- Try to get legal advice about separation and protection orders before you leave if you can do so.
- If you have moved to a new house, arrange to have your mail redirected with Australia Post.
- Change your bank and arrange to have any payments paid into the new account.
- If you can, do not go to the same places that you went to before you left. You should change the routes that you use to get to and from work if you can.
- Increase the security on your house and car. You could speak to a domestic/family violence service to see if they can access brokerage money to do a security assessment and, in some circumstances they may be able to assist you with additional security. It may be possible for you or someone else to install surveillance cameras, install safety lighting, remove any trees or shrubs that could be used to hide in, change the locks on the doors and windows, and install security chains on the inside of the door.
- Turn caller ID on so that you know who is calling before you answer.
- Always keep your mobile phone with you and pre-program phone numbers that you could use in an emergency, such as the police at '000', the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service - 1800 608 122, and the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service - 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732).
- If possible, ask the neighbours to call the police if they see your partner/ex-partner.
- If your ex-partner breaches a protection order, call the police, and report it.
- Ring the Australian Electoral Commission (132326) and ask them to exclude your name and address from being published on the electoral roll.
- If relevant, contact Centrelink and tell them about the change in your circumstances (you could also be eligible for a crisis payment if you contact them within 7 days of leaving).
- Purchase a prepaid sim card because the phone numbers that you call could be itemised on your phone bill.

Further Information

Yemaya Women's Support Service

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Please note that all information contained within this fact sheet is to be used as a guide only. If you require further information or assistance please contact Yemaya Women's Support Service.